



DEMOCRATIC
POLICY
COMMITTEE

Richard A. Gephardt, House Democratic Leader

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EARTH DAY 2000

FOR
A
NEW
WORLD

... the five-year GOP
anti-environmental record

Earth Day 2000 – which falls on April 22 – marks the 30th anniversary of the first Earth Day. This year will mark the largest celebration of Earth Day – with more than 500 million people expected to participate in Earth Day 2000 events worldwide. This Earth Day 2000 report contains the following three sections:

- Overview of Anti-Environmental Record of GOP Congress;
- Environmental Priorities Democrats Are Fighting For in 2000; and
- Five-Year Overview of GOP Anti-Environmental Votes.

Overview of Anti-Environmental Record of GOP Congress

Ever since the Republicans took control of Congress in January 1995, the Republican leadership has sought to weaken, repeal and undermine the laws that, over the past 30 years, have made America's air and water safer, reduced toxics in the environment, and preserved our public lands. In many cases, the Republican leadership has been doing the bidding of special interests in promoting initiatives to undermine environmental laws. For example, here is how the *New York Times* described the writing of the Republican Clean Water Act reauthorization bill in the spring of 1995: "The bill's sponsors and a committee of lobbyists worked side by side on the bill, inserting one provision after another to satisfy industry groups like the Chemical Manufacturers Association, companies like International Paper, and organizations of the cities and states covered by the law."

The antagonism of the GOP leadership towards environmental protection has often been clearly articulated, such as the following quotes from the House Majority Leader and House Majority Whip:

"The EPA is the gestapo of government."

Majority Whip Tom DeLay, AP, 7/28/95

"If we don't close down the Environmental Protection Agency, we at least will put a snaffle bit on them and ride the pony down."

Majority Leader Dick Armey, This Week, 12/18/94

Given the hostility of the House GOP leadership to environmental protection efforts, it is not surprising that over the last five years, the environmental record of the GOP-controlled Congress has never really improved. Following are evaluations of the record of the GOP-controlled Congress since they took charge in 1995 by major environmental organizations:

104th Congress (1995-1996)

"The [GOP] 104th Congress ... mount[ed] an unprecedented assault on landmark environmental laws, public lands, and environmental science. ... If it were not for well-timed presidential vetoes, numerous extremely destructive measures would have become law. The list includes proposals to tie the hands of environmental agencies in the name of 'regulatory reform' and a number of destructive budget riders that would have opened the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling and blocked agencies from carrying out and enforcing key programs of the Clean

Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Superfund law, our food safety laws, and other basic environmental statutes.”

Natural Resources Defense Council, October 1996

105th Congress (1997-1998)

“The [GOP] 105th Congress conducted a well-orchestrated effort to satisfy the special interests by weakening environmental protections, all while hiding the unpopular actions from the voting public. To carry out the attacks, the anti-environment rider became the weapon of choice. The [GOP] leadership in the 105th Congress pushed a ‘Trojan Horse’ approach to slashing environmental protections, programs and standards. ...Through the rider efforts, the [GOP] Congress tried to weaken popular environmental protections yet not suffer the consequences of public backlash.”

League of Conservation Voters, October 1998

First Session of 106th Congress (1999)

“Legislative activity in the first session of the 106th Congress looked remarkably similar to that of the 105th Congress. Assaults on resource protections were widespread, as were attempts to undermine health and safety standards.”

League of Conservation Voters, February 2000

Given the anti-environmental record of the Republican Congress over the last five years, it is not surprising that a recent national poll conducted by Democracy Corps found that Americans trust Democrats more than Republicans by an overwhelming margin on protecting the environment (50% to 22%).

Environmental Priorities Democrats Are Fighting For in 2000

In contrast to the Republican anti-environmental record, Democrats have spent the last five years: 1) working to defeat anti-environmental policies being pursued by Republicans; and 2) promoting important pro-environmental policies of our own. This year, four of the top environmental priorities for Democrats will be:

- Enacting the Defense of the Environment Act;
- Enacting the Lands Legacy Initiative;
- Enacting the Livable Communities Initiative; and
- Stopping the GOP Proposal of Allowing Drilling in ANWR.

Following is an overview of these four top Democratic priorities.

Defense of the Environment Act

A first top environmental priority this year for Democrats is the long-overdue enactment of

the Defense of the Environment Act. As will be seen below, Republicans were successful both in 1998 and 1999 in defeating the Defense of the Environment Act – but Democrats and environmental groups will continue to push for its enactment. The Defense of the Environment Act would require informed debate and an accountable vote on special-interest anti-environmental riders that are attached to other legislation.

The Defense of the Environment Act has become a key priority of environmental groups precisely because, ever since Republicans gained control of Congress in 1995, anti-environmental riders have been brought to the House Floor that would weaken environmental protection – without any identification of these provisions and without the opportunity of the House to analyze and debate the environmental impacts of these provisions. Examples of the anti-environmental policy riders slipped into bills by Republicans in recent years included ones that would have:

- Increased clearcut logging in our National Forests;
- Crippled protection of endangered species;
- Stalled the Superfund program;
- Backslid on energy efficiency standards;
- Blocked the regulation of radioactive contaminants in drinking water;
- Delayed for nine years our efforts to clean up air pollution in national parks;
- Prevented EPA from ensuring groundwater is not contaminated by old nuclear facilities;
- Waived environmental review of grazing permits;
- Blocked long-overdue mining reform; and
- Protected oil companies from paying a fair amount for oil royalties.

Under the Defense of the Environment Act, these anti-environmental riders would have received a separate debate and vote – allowing full and open consideration by the House.

Lands Legacy Initiative

A second top environmental priority this year for Democrats is the Lands Legacy Initiative. Over the last seven years, the Clinton Administration and congressional Democrats have worked hard to better preserve the country's natural treasures – including working to restore the Florida Everglades, save Yellowstone from mining, save the ancient redwoods of California's Headwaters Forest, and protect other precious lands. The Lands Legacy Initiative would build on this record by providing even more extensive protection for national parks and other public lands and by helping states and local communities better preserve local green spaces.

First, the Lands Legacy Initiative would fund expanded federal land acquisition for our national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and public lands – in order to protect our national treasures. Priorities for federal land acquisition include:

- Completing the acquisition of over 180,000 acres in California's Mojave Desert;
- Protecting important sites along the historic Lewis and Clark Trail;
- Making additions to wildlife refuges and national forests in New England;
- Acquiring lands critical to the ongoing restoration of Florida's Everglades;

- Protecting Civil War battlefields;
- Preserving ancient sequoias in California's Sierra Nevada; and
- Protecting bayous and hardwood forests in the Lower Mississippi Delta.

Second, the Lands Legacy Initiative would also help states and local governments protect wildlife and local green spaces. Under the Lands Legacy Initiative, grants would be provided to states and local governments for such purposes as:

- Open space acquisition;
- Habitat and wildlife conservation; and
- Preservation of forest lands, urban and suburban parks, riparian areas, and wetlands.

Livable Communities Initiative

A third top environmental priority this year for Democrats is enactment of the Livable Communities Initiative – which President Clinton submitted to Congress last year.

The Livable Communities Initiative would strengthen the federal government's role as a partner with the growing number of state and local efforts to build "livable communities" and reduce urban sprawl. The initiative would provide communities with new tools and resources to preserve green space, ease traffic congestion, and pursue regional "smart growth" strategies.

A key component of the Livable Communities Initiative is a five-year, \$700 million program that would allow state and local governments to issue no-interest "Better America Bonds" to lenders, who would claim a tax credit for the life of the bond rather than receive interest. It is estimated that these Better America Bonds could generate \$10.8 billion over the next five years for state and local governments. The funds generated would be used to preserve green space, create and restore urban parks, protect water quality, and clean up brownfields.

Stopping GOP Proposal To Begin Drilling in ANWR

Finally, a fourth top environmental priority this year for Democrats is to stop an extremely environmentally-damaging proposal being put forward by Republicans – opening up the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas drilling. Specifically, this month, Senate Republicans included in their budget resolution (S.Con.Res. 101), passed by the Senate on April 7, provisions assuming that \$1.2 billion in revenue would result from allowing oil and gas drilling in the ANWR. Indeed, the Senate tabled (thereby killing) an attempt to strip these GOP provisions from the budget resolution by a vote of 51 to 49.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is America's second largest wildlife refuge and home to hundreds of animal species and millions of migratory birds. Indeed, it is known as "America's Serengeti," due to the unique and unequaled wealth of wildlife in its arctic and subarctic ecosystems. It is a very environmentally-sensitive region, which has received federal protection ever since the Eisenhower Administration. Many environmental experts have pointed out that allowing oil and gas drilling in ANWR would lead to

immeasurable and irreversible damage to one of the last pure preserves in the world – putting at risk many of the wildlife that live there.

Democrats will fight hard throughout the year to ensure that the provisions in the Senate budget resolution calling for drilling in ANWR are not implemented.

Five-Year Overview of GOP Anti-Environmental Votes

Finally, this Special Report provides an accounting of some of the important anti-environmental votes that House Republicans have taken over the last five years, since they became the majority. Given this voting record, it is not surprising that the American public does not trust them to adequately protect the nation's environment. Fortunately, in most cases over the past five years, congressional Democrats and the Clinton Administration have been successful in preventing GOP assaults on the environment from prevailing.

Defeating “The Defense of the Environment Act”

1998 Vote #157 – May 19, 1998 – Waxman “Defense of the Environment Act” Amendment

In May 1998, House Republicans defeated the “Defense of the Environment Act” when it was offered as an amendment to the Mandates Information Act by Rep. Waxman. The Defense of the Environment Act would have required a separate debate and vote on anti-environmental policy riders -- that is, provisions that would weaken or roll back health, safety, or environmental protections -- on the House Floor.

The “Defense of the Environment Act” has been of one of the top priorities of environmental groups over the last several years because, over and over again since Republicans took control of the House and Senate in 1995, legislation has been brought to the House Floor that contained provisions that would weaken environmental protection – **without any identification of those provisions and without the opportunity for the House to analyze and debate the environmental impacts of those provisions**. Under the Waxman amendment, these anti-environmental riders would have received a separate debate and vote – allowing full and open consideration by the House.

1999 Vote #16 – February 10, 1999 – Waxman “Defense of the Environment Act” Amendment

In February 1999, House Republicans once again defeated the “Defense of the Environment Act,” when it was once again offered as an amendment to the Mandates Information Act by Rep. Waxman. As noted above, the Defense of the Environment Act would have required a separate debate and vote on anti-environmental riders.

Imposing Anti-Environmental Riders

1995 Vote #607 — July 31, 1995 — FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act

In passing the FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations bill, House Republicans voted to impose 17 riders on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — riders that would have had the effect of rolling back Clean Water, Safe Drinking Water, and Clean Air protections.

Rollbacks of Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Protections:

The Republican riders that would have had the effect of rolling back Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water protections included provisions:

- Prohibiting EPA from developing and implementing new or revised clean water standards for industrial and municipal point sources;
- Prohibiting EPA from protecting the nation’s remaining wetlands; and
- Prohibiting EPA from putting tougher standards in place for allowable levels of arsenic, radon, and sulfates in drinking water.

Rollbacks of Clean Air Protections:

The Republican riders that would have had the effect of rolling back Clean Air protections included provisions:

- Prohibiting EPA from requiring large industrial sources of air pollution to comply with Clean Air Act standards and monitoring requirements;
- Exempting oil refineries from air toxic standards; and
- Restricting EPA’s ability to limit toxic emissions from cement kilns that burn hazardous waste.

Fortunately, due to strong Democratic opposition, most of these EPA riders were removed in the House-Senate conference on the bill.

1998 Vote #334 – July 23, 1998 – Waxman Amendment to FY 1999 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act

In 1998, House Republicans rejected the Waxman amendment that would have overridden nine anti-environmental riders contained in the GOP FY 1999 VA-HUD-Independent Appropriations bill. These GOP anti-environmental riders included those:

- Delaying the cleanup of mercury from power plants;
- Interfering with EPA's efforts to clean the air in national parks;
- Interfering with Superfund clean ups; and
- Delaying the dredging of PCBs from the Hudson and Housatonic rivers and other PCB-contaminated rivers where dredging was being considered.

Fortunately, due to strong Democratic opposition, most of these anti-environmental riders were removed in the House-Senate conference on the bill.

1999 Vote #528 — October 21, 1999 – FY 2000 Interior Appropriations Act

Once again, in 1999, in adopting the FY 2000 Interior Appropriations conference report, House Republicans voted to impose numerous anti-environmental riders – including:

- Allowing unlimited dumping of “hard rock” mining waste on public lands;
- Allowing grazing on millions of acres of public rangelands without appropriate environmental reviews;
- Allowing the oil industry to avoid paying \$66 to \$100 million a year in royalties for drilling on public lands; and
- Subsidizing increased logging in Alaska's Tongass National Forest.

This bill was not sent to the President's desk, and due to strong Democratic opposition to these riders, most of these anti-environmental riders were either significantly watered down or completely removed in the final omnibus appropriations bill signed by the President.

Defeating Provisions to Ensure Compliance with Environmental and Other Key Laws

1999 Vote #19 – February 11, 1999 – Kucinich Amendment To Ensure Compliance with Environmental Laws

In 1999, House Republicans rejected the Kucinich amendment on ensuring compliance with environmental laws. The underlying bill required federal agencies to waive penalties on small businesses for first-time violations of federal reporting requirements, including such requirements as reporting contaminants in drinking water. In an effort to ensure compliance with environmental and other key laws, the Kucinich amendment would have

preserved agency discretion to pursue fines against intentional bad actors.

For example, under the guise of exempting first-time violators from fines for “paperwork” violations, the underlying bill could allow thousands of polluters to fail to report emissions of hazardous substances into a community’s air or water. The Kucinich amendment would have protected small businesses acting in good faith from penalties for inadvertent paperwork errors, but would have preserved agencies’ ability to fine deliberate violations of reporting requirements under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other public health statutes. The Senate has never acted on the bill.

Weakening the Clean Water Act

1995 Vote #337 — May 16, 1995 — Clean Water Act Reauthorization

In passing the Republican Clean Water Act Reauthorization bill, House Republicans voted to significantly weaken the Clean Water Act. The Republican bill contained numerous provisions that would have weakened current law, including the following:

- Allowing exemptions for 70,000 chemicals from existing pollution control requirements.
- Creating numerous waivers for specific industries such as oil and gas, mining, pulp, and paper.
- Allowing waivers for over 20 cities from the current requirement for secondary treatment of sewage before discharging into the ocean.
- Eliminating standards for storm water runoff. Indeed, the bill eliminated the need for permits that currently control runoff in over 300 communities and 130,000 industrial facilities.
- Creating a definition of wetlands that would exempt 60 to 80 percent of the nation’s wetlands from protection.

Indeed, the House Republican bill was so radical and extreme that the Senate never took it up and no further action was taken on the Clean Water Act Reauthorization in the 104th Congress.

Cutting the Overall EPA Budget

1995 Vote #607 — July 31, 1995 — FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act

In passing the FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act, House Republicans voted to slash funding for the overall budget of the Environmental Protection Agency by one-third — which would have required a drastic cutback in the nation's environmental protection efforts. Specifically, the Republican bill would have cut the funding of the Environmental Protection Agency by \$2.3 billion or by 32% below the FY 1995 level.

1995 Vote #844 — December 7, 1995 — FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Conference Report

The drastic cut in the EPA budget that had been adopted by House Republicans was somewhat scaled back in conference with the Senate; however, the cut in EPA funding remained deep. In passing the FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations conference report, House Republicans voted to cut funding for EPA by \$1.5 billion or by 21% below the FY 1995 level. (President Clinton vetoed this conference report in December 1995. Ultimately, Democrats were successful in restoring \$800 million of this Republican cut — thereby scaling back the FY 1996 environmental cut from 21% to 10% in the final FY 1996 appropriations bill.)

1996 Vote #282 — June 26, 1996 — FY 1997 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act

In passing the FY 1997 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act, House Republicans voted to cut the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency significantly below the request of the Clinton Administration. Specifically, the Republican bill cut EPA funding by \$473 million or by 7% below the Clinton Administration's request. (Ultimately, Democrats were successful in restoring \$184 million of this Republican cut.)

Cutting Funding for the Superfund Program

1995 Vote #607 — July 31, 1995 — FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act

In passing the FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act, House Republicans voted to slash funding for Superfund cleanups by \$421 million — or by 30% below the FY 1995 level. This harsh cut would have significantly slowed down or stopped the cleanup of over 400 toxic waste sites around the country.

1995 Vote #844 — December 7, 1995 — 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Conference Report

The drastic cut in the Superfund budget that had been adopted by House Republicans was somewhat scaled back in conference with the Senate; however, the Republican cut in Superfund funding remained deep. In passing the FY 1996 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations conference report, House Republicans voted to cut funding for Superfund by \$267 million — or by 19% below the FY 1995 level. (President Clinton vetoed this conference report

in December 1995. Ultimately, Democrats were successful in restoring \$150 million of this cut — thereby scaling back the Superfund funding cut from 19% to 8% in the final FY 1996 appropriations bill.)

1996 Vote #282 — June 26, 1996 — FY 1997 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act

Once again, in passing the FY 1997 VA-HUD-EPA Appropriations Act, House Republicans voted to cut FY 1997 funding for the Superfund program by \$46 million below the Administration's request and by \$8 million below the FY 1996 level. (Ultimately, Democrats were successful in fully restoring this Republican cut.)

Fighting Efforts to Improve Land and Water Conservation Fund

1999 Vote #281 – July 13, 1999 – McGovern Amendment on Land and Water Conservation Fund

In 1964, Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to purchase public lands for open space and outdoor recreation, using revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling leases. In addition to funding land purchases for national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests throughout the country, LWCF had a state grant program, providing matching grants to states for the purchase, development and improvement of open space and outdoor recreation areas.

However, one of the first acts of Republicans when they took control of Congress in 1995 was to zero out the state grant program. In 1999, like in its previous four Interior bills, House Republicans once again provided for zero funding for the state grant program in their FY 2000 Interior Appropriations bill and fought efforts on the Floor for funding to be restored. Fortunately, a coalition of Democrats and moderate Republicans fought the GOP leadership on this and were able to pass an amendment offered by Rep. McGovern (D-MA) that restored \$30 million for the state grant program, by the close vote of 213 to 202.

Cutting Funding for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs

1998 Vote #313 – July 21, 1998 – Skaggs Energy Efficiency and Conservation Amendment

During consideration of the FY 1999 Interior Appropriations bill, House Republicans rejected an amendment offered by Rep. Skaggs (D-Colo.) to restore cuts that the bill made in funding for energy efficiency and conservation programs. The GOP bill cut funding for energy efficiency and conservation programs by \$25 million below the FY 1998 level and by more than \$200 million below the Administration's request. The Skaggs amendment would have restored funding for energy efficiency and conservation programs – adding \$44.5 million to these accounts. (Indeed, overall, between FY 1996 and FY 2000, Republicans have cut the Administration's request for energy efficiency programs by a total of \$1.3 billion.)

What Republicans have failed to recognize is that energy efficiency programs **work**. Despite GOP cutbacks, over the years, working in partnership with private enterprise, the country has made dramatic improvements in everything from high-efficiency home appliances, to energy-efficient home construction, to low-energy lighting. Indeed, energy efficiency improvements now save U.S. consumers \$150 billion to \$200 billion a year. If all the Energy Department's energy efficiency programs were funded at the level requested by the Clinton Administration, it is estimated that the U.S. would cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 136 million tons by the year 2010.

Opening Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to Drilling

1995 Vote #743 — October 26, 1995 — Budget Reconciliation Act

1995 Vote #812 — November 17, 1995 — Budget Reconciliation Conference Report

In 1995, in passing the bill and conference report on budget reconciliation, House Republicans voted to, for the first time, open up to oil and gas drilling the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge — America's second largest wildlife refuge and home to a wide variety of plants and animals. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is a very environmentally-sensitive region, which has received federal protection ever since the Eisenhower Administration. To make matters worse, the Republican bill would have created, for drilling in ANWR, wholesale exemptions from environmental and other laws applicable to the management of oil and gas leasing. Thus, in essence, the bill would have turned the management of this unique wildlife refuge over to the decisions of the oil and gas industry and provided that the refuge would not have to operate within the constraints of the resource and species protection laws that apply elsewhere in the United States. (Fortunately, Democrats strongly resisted this Republican proposal — and it was blocked when President Clinton vetoed the budget reconciliation conference report in which it had been included.)

Promoting Logging in Tongass National Forest in Alaska

1995 Vote #523 — July 18, 1995 — FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Act

1995 Vote #854 — December 13, 1995 — FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Conference Report

In passing the bill and conference report on FY 1996 Interior Appropriations, House Republicans voted to greatly accelerate the logging that is permitted in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska — accelerated logging that experts had determined would damage the forest's fragile ecosystem. The Tongass National Forest in Alaska is one of the world's few remaining temperate rain forests. (President Clinton then vetoed the conference report in December 1995.)

1996 Vote #55 — March 7, 1996 — FY 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Then, in passing the FY 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act in March 1996, House Republicans once again voted to greatly accelerate the logging that is permitted in the Tongass National Forest. (Fortunately, Democratic efforts succeeded in blocking these

provisions — by including language in the Omnibus Appropriations conference report that allowed President Clinton to waive the Tongass provisions — which he did on April 26, 1996.)

1998 Vote #329 – July 23, 1998 – Miller Amendment on Logging Roads in Tongass

In 1998, House Republicans defeated the Miller amendment to the FY 1999 Interior Appropriations bill, which would have prohibited the use of funds in the bill to construct new timber roads in the Tongass National Forest. Proponents of the amendment pointed out that the Tongass already has over 4,600 miles of permanent roads which have been built for the timber industry. The GOP bill allowed the construction of new timber roads. (Fortunately, due to Democratic efforts, the final conference report on the bill dropped the provisions allowing these new roads.)

Mining Giveaway

1995 Vote #743 — October 26, 1995 — Budget Reconciliation Act

1995 Vote #812 — November 17, 1995 — Budget Reconciliation Conference Report

In passing the bill and conference report on budget reconciliation, House Republicans voted to implement sham “mining reforms” — that were so generous to big mining interests that they amounted to a giveaway of the nation’s mineral resources to these interests. In 1993, the House had passed a true mining reform bill, which protected the interests of U.S. taxpayers by imposing fair royalties for the extraction of minerals on public lands. By contrast, the Republican provisions would have imposed much lower royalties on mining interests. (Fortunately, Democrats strongly resisted this Republican proposal — and it was blocked when President Clinton vetoed the budget reconciliation conference report in which it had been included.)

1999 Vote #288 – July 14, 1999 – Rahall Amendment on Dumping of Hardrock Mining Waste

In 1999, Sen. Craig, during the markup of the FY 2000 Interior Appropriations bill by the Senate Appropriations Committee, was successful in adding “the Craig rider,” which would have legalized unlimited mine waste dumping on public lands. Fortunately, when the House considered its version of the Interior Appropriations bill, a coalition of Democrats and moderate Republicans were successful in adding to the bill a provision designed to overturn “the Craig rider” — in passing the Rahall amendment which sought to place limits on mining waste dumping. As a result, in the final bill signed by the President, the Craig rider was significantly scaled back.

Grazing Fee Giveaway

1997 Vote #549 — October 30, 1997 — Grazing Fee “Reform”

In passing the Republican Grazing Fee Reform bill, House Republicans voted to pass a grazing fee “reform” bill that made a mockery of serious reform — raising the outdated,

minimal fee charged to grazers on federal land by just 20 cents to \$1.55 per animal unit per month — far below the fees charged on nearby state lands and far below the market-rate fees charged on nearby private lands. The bill also made it more difficult for federal agencies to monitor the condition of rangelands and to alter grazing practices where necessary to limit damage to the land, and locked in grazing at existing levels, even if it caused environmental damage. The Senate never acted on the bill.

Giveaway to Corporate Interests in National Parks

1995 Vote #743 — October 25, 1995 — Budget Reconciliation Act

1995 Vote #812 — November 17, 1995 — Budget Reconciliation Conference Report

In passing the bill and conference report on budget reconciliation, House Republicans voted to implement sham “park concessions reform” — that amounted to a giveaway to certain special interests. In 1994, the House had passed a true park concessions reform bill — which established a competitive bidding process for concessions contracts in national parks. By contrast, under the Republican provisions, significant preferences would have been provided to existing concessionaires in the awarding of contracts. (Fortunately, Democrats strongly resisted this Republican proposal — and it was blocked when President Clinton vetoed the budget reconciliation conference report in which it had been included.)

Undermining Endangered Species Act

1995 Vote #523 — July 18, 1995 — FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Act

1995 Vote #854 — December 13, 1995 — FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Conference Report

In passing the bill and conference report on Interior Appropriations, House Republicans voted to impose a moratorium on the listing for protection of any additional threatened and endangered species. (President Clinton then vetoed the conference report in December 1995.)

1996 Vote # 55 — March 7, 1996 — FY 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Then, in passing the FY 1996 Omnibus Appropriations bill in March 1996, House Republicans once again voted to impose a moratorium on the listing for protection of any additional threatened and endangered species. (Fortunately, Democratic efforts succeeded in blocking these provisions — by including language in the Omnibus Appropriations conference report that allowed President Clinton to waive the Endangered Species provisions — which he did on April 26, 1996.)

Weakening Protection of California Desert

1995 Vote #523 — July 18, 1995 — FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Act

1995 Vote #854 — December 13, 1995 — FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Conference Report

In passing the bill and conference report on FY 1996 Interior Appropriations, House Republicans voted to nullify portions of the California Desert Act by stripping away management of the Mojave National Preserve from the National Park Service — thereby allowing much greater use of the desert for recreational and commercial purposes. (President Clinton then vetoed the conference report in December 1995.)

1996 Vote #55 — March 7, 1996 — FY 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act

Then, in passing the FY 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act in March 1996, House Republicans once again voted to nullify portions of the California Desert Act by stripping away management of the Mojave National Preserve from the National Park Service. (Once again Democratic efforts succeeded in blocking these provisions — by including language in the Omnibus Appropriations conference report that allowed President Clinton to waive the Mojave Preserve provisions — which he did on April 26, 1996.)

Restricting World Heritage Sites

1997 Vote #504 — October 8, 1997 — World Heritage Sites/Biosphere Reserves

In passing the World Heritage Sites/Biosphere Reserves bill, House Republicans voted to place severe restrictions on the participation of the U.S. in the World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve program. World Heritage Sites are places that have been recognized as world-class natural and cultural resources worthy of preservation. (Seventeen of the twenty World Heritage Sites in the U.S. are national parks.) Biosphere Reserves are established to represent the world's varied ecosystems and provide opportunities for scientific research and sustainable economic development. (Thirty of the forty-seven Biosphere Reserves in the U.S. are national parks.) Both programs are designed to promote worldwide protection of natural and cultural resources by enhancing public awareness and facilitating greater international scientific cooperation. Fortunately, this bill was never acted upon by the Senate.

1999 Vote #383 – August 5, 1999 – Hayworth World Heritage Sites Amendment

Once again in 1999, House Republicans adopted an amendment offered by Rep. Hayworth (R-AZ) to the FY 2000 Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations bill, which would have prohibited any funds in the bill from being used to add any World Heritage site to the World Heritage Committee's list of endangered sites. The Hayworth amendment was part of a concerted effort by the GOP to mislead the public that the World Heritage Committee was undermining U.S. sovereignty and management of U.S. public lands. World Heritage Sites are simply places that have been recognized as world-class natural and cultural resources worthy of preservation. In fact, being listed as a World Heritage site has no impact on the management of public lands. Fortunately, due to opposition from Democrats, this provision was not included in the final bill.

Limiting National Monuments

1997 Vote #495 — October 7, 1997 — National Monument Designation

Finally, in passing the National Monument Designation Act, House Republicans voted to curb the ability held by every president since Theodore Roosevelt to protect federal lands from development and other damage. Specifically, the bill amended the Antiquities Act to prohibit the President from unilaterally designating a national monument larger than 50,000 acres. Opponents of the bill pointed out that the bill would prevent important federal resources from being protected in the future and would allow powerful Members of Congress to frustrate nationally significant land protection efforts. The Senate never acted on the bill.